

CLAIMS

1. A thermal aircraft having an outer envelope for containing a quantity of hot air and supporting a load-carrying basket, the envelope having a aperture formed therein at or near its upper end to permit outflow of air from the interior of the envelope, said aperture being adapted to be closed by removable venting means under pressure of air inside the envelope, and a closure assembly for the venting means permitting controlled opening and closing thereof, wherein the venting means comprises an operculum of a flexible material and substantially of parachute form adapted to removably cover and close the said aperture, and wherein the closure assembly includes first control means to extend the operculum laterally or radially to its maximum surface area at which point it removably covers and seals said aperture, characterised in that said first control means includes conjoined contiguous venting control means which permit the outer perimeter at least of the operculum to be pulled away from the perimeter edge of the aperture to variably open same.

2. A hot air balloon having an outer envelope for containing a quantity of hot air and supporting a load carrying basket, the envelope having an aperture formed therein at or near its upper end to permit outflow of air from the interior of the envelope, said aperture being adapted to be closed by removable venting means under pressure of air inside the envelope, and a closure assembly for the venting means permitting controlled opening and closing thereof, wherein the venting means comprises an operculum of a flexible material and substantially of parachute form adapted to removably cover and close the said aperture, and wherein the closure assembly includes first control means to extend the operculum laterally or radially to its maximum surface area at which point it removably covers and seals said aperture, characterised in that said first control means includes conjoined contiguous venting control means which permit the outer perimeter at least of the operculum to be pulled away from the perimeter edge of the aperture to variably open same.